

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 IO-13
SSM-03 MCT-01 HA-05 CU-04 OPR-02 PER-01 SCS-06
CA-01 OC-06 /114 W
-----120085 151534Z /50

O 151403Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7099
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1381
EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, MARCH 15, 1500 HOURS LOCAL

1. BEING SUMMARY. ISRAELI FORCES MOVED INTO SOUTH
LEBANON ON SEVERAL AXES SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON MARCH
14. AT ABOUT 1400 HOURS ON MARCH 15 TWO ISRAELI F-4
PHANTOMS HIT TARGETS NEAR BEIRUT AIRPORT.
PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS DENOUNCED THE ISRAELI ATTACKS AS
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AGGRESSION AGAINST LEBANON. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF
UNUSUAL SYRIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS IN THE BEIRUT AREA.
CIVILIANS ARE FLEEING SOUTH LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SITUATION.

A. SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON MARCH 14 ISRAELI

FORCES SUPPORTED BY TANKS, ARTILLERY AND AIRCRAFT MOVED INTO SOUTH LEBANON ALONG SEVERAL AXES (SEE IR 68570068-78). AT ABOUT 1400 HOURS LOCAL ON MARCH 15 TWO ISRAELI F-4 PHANTOMS HIT TARGETS ALONG THE BEACH NEAR BEIRUT AIRPORT, ACCORDING TO AMERICAN OBSERVERS AND LOCAL RADIO REPORTS. SYRIAN AND PALESTINIAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT POSITIONS FIRED ON THE PLANES, BUT DID NOT DOWN ANY. THE AIRPORT HAS BEEN CLOSED. EIGHT CASUALTIES WERE BROUGHT TO AUB HOSPITAL; ONE WAS DEAD ON ARRIVAL. SEVEN OF THE CASUALTIES WERE LEBANESE ADULTS, AND ONE WAS A 13 YEAR OLD PALESTINIAN GIRL.

B. IN THE WESTERN SECTOR OF SOUTH LEBANON THE ISRAELIS HAVE TAKEN NAKOURA AND YARIN, LANDED FORCES NEAR RASHIDIYAH CAMP ABOUT 5 KM SOUTH OF TYRE AND SHELLED THE CAMP WITH LONG-RANGE ARTILLERY, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE DATT SOURCES. THE ISRAELIS HAVE ALSO TAKEN BINT JBAIL IN THE CENTRAL SECTOR AND AL-KHIYAM AND IBL AS SAQI IN THE EASTERN SECTOR, THE SAME SOURCES REPORT.

C. PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS HAS DENOUNCED ISRAELI ATTACKS AS AGGRESSION AGAINST LEBANESE TERRITORY. OTHER LEBANESE OFFICIALS HAVE NOT YET COMMENTED PUBLICLY. (AL-HOSS HAD SAID ON MARCH 12 THAT LEBANON WAS "NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN ISRAEL.")
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3. SITUATION IN BEIRUT.

IN A TOUR OF BEIRUT AREA MORNING OF MARCH 15 EMBOFF SAW NO EVIDENCE OF UNUSUAL SYRIAN TROOP MOVEMENT (NOR DID DATT ON MARCH 14). EMBOFF ALSO OBSERVED THE FOLLOWING:

--IN ASHRAFIYAH AND SUBURBS, SCHOOLS AND SHOPS WERE OPEN AND TRAFFIC NORMAL. SYRIAN SOLDIERS WERE AT THEIR USUAL STATIONS OFF SASSINE CIRCLE, IN FRONT OF MURR TOWER AND ELSEWHERE AND WERE TAKING NO UNUSUAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS. ONE CHRISTIAN MILITIAMAN WEARING A PISTOL WAS WALKING IN DOWNTOWN ASHRAFIYAH, A NOT UNUSUAL SIGHT, BUT NO OTHER ARMED MILITIA WERE ON THE STREETS.

--IN WEST BEIRUT SHOPS WERE OPEN ALTHOUGH TRAFFIC WAS SLIGHTLY LESS THAN NORMAL. THERE WERE NO ARMED MILITIA ON THE STREETS. SECURITY AT AL MURABITUN HEAD-QUARTERS ON CORNICHE MAZRA WAS NORMAL.

--(MOST HIGH SCHOOLS WERE OPEN, ACCORDING TO RSO

SOURCES.THE STUDENTS AT INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE NEXT TO THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT CAMPUS WERE ON STRIKE, HOWEVER, AND AUB CANCELLED ALL CLASSES.) STUDENTS AT THE LAW FACULTY OF LEBANON UNIVERSITY WERE LISTENING TO MILITANT SONGS OVER LOUDSPEAKERS RATHER THAN ATTENDING CLASSES.

--THE PERIMETER OF SHATILLA CAMP SEEMED CALM. TRAFFIC WAS NORMAL AND SHOPS WERE OPEN.

4. CIVILIANS IN THE SOUTH.

--IN SOUTH LEBANON SCHOOLS AND SHOPS ARE CLOSED AND CIVILIANS ARE FLEEING THE AREA, ACCORDING TO CONFIDENTIAL

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VARIOUS SOURCES. PALESTINIANCIVILIANS HAVE BEEN FLEEING THE CAMPS IN THE SOUTH SINCE SHORTLY AFTER THE MARCH 11 ATTACK IN ISRAEL, ACCORDING TO UNRWA SOURCES. MANY CIVILIANS FROM THESOUTH ARE EXPECTED TO COME TO BEIRUT, ADDING TO THE LONGSTANDING REFUGEE PROBLEM HERE. PARKER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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